

SPRING 2024



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
Dumke College of Health Professions

ANNIE TAYLOR DEE
— SCHOOL OF —
NURSING



**DOCTOR OF
NURSING PRACTICE**

*Graduate
Projects*

Message from the Dean

In response to the intensified healthcare needs that surround us, the Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing housed in the Dumke College of Health Professions at Weber State University (WSU), is still finding and seizing opportunities during these challenges. And you, graduate, are our success through the opposition.

As a graduate of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program, we are proud to see you empowered by the very first doctorate degree offered by WSU. You will now move forward with the critical knowledge to provide leadership to the complex field of nursing. You will have the ability to develop innovative competencies needed for patient outcomes and healthcare deliveries. You will be able to educate at a higher level and offer advance practice approaches, and you will continue to be the essential and the contributing member of the healthcare teams you serve. We look forward to you standing as leading role models in the field of nursing and to the students that follow your footsteps.

We congratulate you on reaching this milestone and achieving your goals. You have worked hard, sacrificed some and experienced much to reach this point in your lives. We hope that you will stay in touch with us and let us know of your success.

Heartfelt congratulations to you and all the best.

Yasmen Simonian

PhD, MLS (ASCP)CM, FASAHP

Dean/Presidential Distinguished Professor
Dumke College of Health Professions



Message from the Chair



Congratulations, Graduates! You deserve to be celebrated! It is a pleasure for all of us here at the Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing to recognize you for your hard work and perseverance. It is no small feat to graduate with a doctorate, and we could not be more proud. You are a part of history as you graduate with your Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from the first doctoral program at Weber State University. We are confident that despite achieving a terminal degree in your field, you will continue to support and advance the nursing profession.

We also recognize that it takes a village, and we are grateful to your support system, who saw you through this monumental work. Your personal sacrifices and those of your loved ones enabled you to be where you are today.

The faculty and staff of the Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing share your sense of accomplishment and pride with you. We are excited to see your impact on patients, families, and communities. Regardless of where you are in your nursing journey, we are confident that the knowledge and skills you have gained will benefit us all. Please know our sincere gratitude for allowing us to share this journey with you. We wish you all the best as you continue to pursue your dreams!

Rieneke Holman

PhD, RN

Chair & Professor
Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing
Dumke College of Health Professions

Program Director Remarks

Congratulations, graduates of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program! We extend our heartfelt accolades on your graduation from the Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing, where you have successfully completed the Doctor of Nursing Practice program within the Dumke College of Health Professions at Weber State University. This significant achievement marks a momentous milestone in both your personal and professional journey.

As you step into this new chapter of your life, we want to acknowledge the numerous individuals who join us in celebrating your remarkable accomplishments. It has been a privilege to be a part of your educational journey, and we have witnessed your tremendous growth as advanced nurse clinicians, educators, and leaders. You are now equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to translate evidence into practice, ultimately enhancing healthcare outcomes and advancing nursing practice across diverse healthcare settings.

With great anticipation, I look forward to seeing you carry forward our legacy of nursing excellence as you embark on your future endeavors. This is just the beginning of the remarkable impact you will make in the field of nursing.

Carrie Jeffrey

PhD, RN

DNP Program Director & Assistant Professor
Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing
Dumke College of Health Professions



Faculty Remarks

Congratulations! Working alongside you as you finished your DNP projects has been a pleasure. Your hard work, dedication, and perseverance have not gone unnoticed. I'm inspired by your achievements and the incredible work you will do for patients and communities throughout your career. I'm excited to see what you'll do next!

Caitlin Campbell

PhD, RN
Instructor

I am incredibly impressed with the hard work and dedication I have witnessed throughout your projects at Weber State University. I love seeing your changes and impact on nursing as you improve environments, enhance patient care, and inspire those around you! In a field often portrayed as grueling and focused on burnout, it is refreshing to see you empowered to make changes and instill beauty and hope into healthcare. This is the true art of nursing. I am so grateful to have been a part of your journey as you advance your career! Congratulations on your graduation; you are all inspiring!

Amber Fowler

DNP, RN
Instructor

Your graduation from the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program is an essential personal and professional milestone and deserves my sincerest congratulations. It has been a pleasure to support your learning and professional growth as advanced nurse leaders who are prepared with the knowledge and skills to translate evidence into practice to improve healthcare outcomes and advance nursing practice in various healthcare settings. I look forward with great anticipation as you continue the Annie Taylor Dee School of Nursing's legacy of nursing excellence in your future pursuits.

Melissa NeVille Norton

DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, CNE
Professor

Doctor of Nursing Practice Faculty and Staff

Kristy Baron
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Catie Weimer
Graduate Programs Clinical
and Marketing Coordinator

Community Partners

We want to send a generous thank you to our community partners for their time, dedication and commitment to our program and students. Without their participation, guidance, and assistance we would not have been able to strive in our commitment to our students for a high quality and impactful educational experiences.

Weber State University aims for a dual mission approach in education by creating community-based learning and public service opportunities, we thank the following organizations for helping us achieve our goal!

AMG Senior Medical Group

Columbus State University School of Nursing

HCA Community Hospital - West Valley Medical Center

Joyce University

Mesa View Medical Group

Mobile Medical Group (MMG)

Salem Health Hospital

St. Francis Emory Healthcare



2024

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

Graduate Projects



Implementation of an Evidence-based Nurse-Led Peer Review Process at a Rural Emergency Department



**TRACEE
CHAPMAN**

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**EXECUTIVE
LEADERSHIP**

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SCHOOL OF
NURSING

PURPOSE

This Doctor of Nursing (DNP) quality improvement project aimed to establish a nurse peer review process for emergency department nurses to improve interprofessional communication skills and collaboration and evaluate the quality of nursing documentation to improve patient health outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

An evidence-based peer review process was established for the emergency department nursing staff that included workflow process training, staff education, self-appraisal tools, peer feedback tools, and an in-situ simulation. For the balancing measures, a pre-project questionnaire evaluated satisfaction regarding the current system and the perceived benefits, strengths, and weaknesses of a nurse peer review process. The pre-and post-surveys used a 5-point Likert scale and an area for comments. Descriptive data was collected to analyze the findings.

RESULTS

Post-survey results indicated that most nurses support a team-based environment. The simulation questionnaire indicated that the nurse's knowledge of sepsis protocols and communication skills improved after participating in the simulation and debrief. Qualitative comments included that nurses felt safe speaking freely during the peer review sessions. Nurses verbalized that peer review was non-punitive and meant to provide an avenue for professional growth and development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The feedback on the peer review process was predominantly positive. Being able to self-reflect on practice and give feedback to others is the precursor for just-in-time feedback, which can lead to improved patient outcomes at the bedside. One potential challenge is integrating peer review into performance evaluations, which may affect professional goals and compensation and have unintended consequences.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Amy Parsons MSN, BSN, RN

FACULTY LEAD

Melissa NeVille Norton DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, CNE

Improved Geriatric Mental Health Care in Primary Care Providers

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to provide focused geriatric mental health education for geriatric PCPs who treat mental health disorders (insomnia, anxiety, and depression).

METHODOLOGY

A needs gap analysis identified a deficit in organized education for geriatric PCPs on feeling comfortable with first-line treatment options for mental health disorders. Three decision trees were created to address treatment for insomnia, anxiety and depression. A pre and post survey was completed, and the data was reviewed.

RESULTS

This project shows that decision trees help providers make informed treatment choices. This was accomplished by implementing an education program using a pre-recorded PowerPoint presentation that addresses recognizing and treating insomnia, anxiety, and depression.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This project fills a gap in care by increasing the confidence of primary care providers providing geriatric mental health care. This project will continue providing geriatric PCPs working as mobile providers with education and training on managing geriatric mental health disorders.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Justin Mansfield MD

FACULTY LEAD

Cynthia Beynon PhD, RN, CNE
Amber Fowler DNP, RN



**JENN
GRISWOLD**

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Evidence-Based Diagnosis and Management of Bipolar Disorder in Primary Care



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PURPOSE

Bipolar disorder is often misdiagnosed in the primary care setting due to patients presenting in a depressive state. Rural areas face additional challenges due to reduced access to mental health care, and primary care providers (PCPs) are often providing mental health services. This project aimed to improve PCP screening for and recognition of bipolar disorder using the Rapid Mood Screener (RMS) tool. PCP education is one intervention that can address this gap in care.

METHODOLOGY

PCPs were educated on the use of screening tools, clinical examination, and initial treatment steps for bipolar disorder. RMS tools were provided in exam rooms. PCPs completed pre- and post-survey assessments to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention.

RESULTS

The post-survey results indicate increased provider confidence in recognizing bipolar disorder and improved ability to differentiate major depression from bipolar disorder. Additionally, PCPs reported improved confidence in the use of screening tools, prescribing medication for bipolar disorder, and providing information to patients on bipolar disorder.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Provider confidence improved with the implementation of an educational program for mental health in a primary care practice. PCPs had more confidence and knowledge in caring for patients who present with mental health symptoms and reported improved confidence in evaluating patients for bipolar disorder. This project helped address the gap in mental health care in rural primary care.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Heather Buzbee MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, PMHNP-BC

FACULTY LEAD

Cynthia Beynon PhD, RN, CNE
Amber Fowler DNP, RN

Leading Current Nurses and Student Nurses to the Practice Doctorate

PURPOSE

A city in the Western portion of Georgia lacks an adequate number of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) prepared nurses to fill current and future education or leadership roles. This project aimed to inform Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students and current Registered Nurses (RNs) in this city of the DNP degree.

METHODOLOGY

An educational PowerPoint presentation about the DNP and hardcopy/electronic DNP handouts were developed, presented, and distributed to BSN students and current RNs. A pre-survey, post-survey, and follow-up survey were administered to assess knowledge and attitude change towards the DNP before and after the educational intervention.

RESULTS

In the pre-survey (N=34), only 36% of the participants were interested in obtaining a DNP degree. In the post-survey measure (N=34), this number increased to 59%. A one-month follow-up survey (N=30) indicated the percentage increased even further to 73%. After the education, the BSN students and current RNs reported an increase in their awareness, knowledge, research, and intent to pursue a DNP in the future.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Participants provided positive feedback about the educational presentation and handouts, which facilitated further conversation about the importance of the role of the DNP degree in nursing and the community. Hospitals and nursing schools in the area could include education about the DNP for current and future students and staff nurses further to assist the community's education on the DNP and increase enrollment in DNP programs, leading to a decreased community gap in DNP-prepared nurses.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Tamara Condrey DNP, RN, MSN, CNE
Yolanda McGee BSN, RN

FACULTY LEAD

Kelley Trump DNP, MSN/ED, RN, CNE, COI
Caitlin Campbell PhD, RN



**TONYA RENEE
LEWIS**

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Implementation of a Mentorship Program for Clinical Nursing Faculty

PURPOSE

The project aimed to improve clinical nursing faculty's job satisfaction and the intent to remain with the organization through a mentorship program for newly hired clinical faculty. Secondary objectives of the program included developing collaborative relationships, promoting positive work environments, and fostering support among the faculty throughout the semester.

METHODOLOGY

The mentorship program was introduced during an in-service meeting, and faculty who had been with the organization for at least a year were invited to mentor faculty hired within the previous six months. Mentorship dyads (mentor and mentee) were encouraged to meet at least every other week throughout the semester to discuss the mentee's concerns and address weaknesses. Participants completed pre- and post-program surveys that quantitatively and qualitatively assessed job satisfaction and the intent to remain with the organization.

RESULTS

Comparison of the pre- and post-survey results indicated that the participants' (n = 16) satisfaction and intent to remain with the organization increased. Further, the faculty valued the mentorship program and offered suggestions for future improvement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Continuation of the mentorship program will support newly hired clinical faculty and promote collaborative relationships among the faculty team. The program should be revised as needed to fit the needs of the participants. The mentorship program is adaptable to other departments and organizations wishing to improve faculty job satisfaction and retention.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Denise Menonna Quinn DNP, RN, NPD-BC, AOCNS, BMTCN

FACULTY LEAD

Cynthia Beynon PhD, RN, CNE
Amber Fowler DNP, RN



**TAMI
SUISSE**

DNP, RN

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Implementation of an Evidence-based Surgical and Post-Anesthesia Transfer Process at a Level 2 Hospital Center

PURPOSE

A DNP project was undertaken to enhance patient outcomes and care quality in the intra-operative and post-anesthesia care units by implementing a standardized patient handoff process for healthcare providers and staff nurses. This evidence-based tool and structured approach to the handoff process led to better communication and fewer adverse events.

METHODOLOGY

This DNP-quality improvement project was conducted in a level 2 trauma hospital in Oregon. Project participants included an interprofessional team including nursing administration, staff nurses, anesthesiologists, and nurse anesthetists. A new workflow process was established using the evidence-based WHAT tool (Written Handoff Anesthesia Tool) as the structured handoff model. Staff education, standardized handoff, situ simulation, and project analysis occurred using the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle. For the balancing measures, a pre-project questionnaire was developed to evaluate the nurse's level of confidence regarding the new handoff system and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the system and the WHAT tool. A separate questionnaire was designed for use after the project was completed to evaluate implementation following the completion of the PDSA cycles, which reflected the same topics. The pre-and-post surveys used a 5-point Likert scale and an area for comments. Descriptive data was collected to analyze the findings.

RESULTS

Nurses and healthcare providers have reported shortcomings in communication and safety culture in the surgical area. Data collected from the project demonstrated 80% or greater confidence by participants in implementing a standardized handoff process and communication tool, which has been found to enhance staff's perception of communication.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Communicating timely and accurate information about a patient from one healthcare team member is a critical element of patient surgical care and recovery. Utilizing a standardized handoff tool and process with an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration improves patient transitions from the operating room to the post-anesthesia unit.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Dianne Powers BSN, RN, CPAN, NE-BC

FACULTY LEAD

Melissa NeVille Norton DNP, APRN, CPNP-PC, CNE



**MELISSA
LYNETTE
TILLMAN-
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Improving End-of-Life Care Through Advanced Care Planning Education and Policy Change

PURPOSE

The population of older adults and their life expectancy are increasing throughout the United States. Many suffer from chronic illnesses that require specialized end-of-life care. Yet, most of these patients have not participated in advanced care planning (ACP) or completed legal documentation to direct their care through end-of-life. Therefore, this project aimed to increase the frequency of ACP conversations and the completion rate of Provider Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms.

METHODOLOGY

This project consisted of two parts. First, the project instituted a policy change for ACP and completion of POLST forms. Second, it gave health providers an educational in-service regarding ACP and proper completion of POLST forms and advanced directives (AD). Pre- and post-Likert-scale surveys were obtained. Chart audits were completed to assess the percentage of POLST form completion for active patients pre- and post-intervention. Additionally, a billing report was obtained pre- and post-intervention to determine the frequency with which ACP CPT codes were billed, indicating how often providers participated in ACP conversations during patient visits.

RESULTS

The project showed increased POLST form completion and frequency of ACP conversations. POLST form completion rate increased from 25% to 66% two months post-intervention. Likewise, ACP billing was coded 6% more following the intervention. Survey results showed participants had a higher knowledge of AD and felt more comfortable with ACP conversations following the interventions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Implementing a policy change and providing an educational in-service can improve the completion rate of POLST forms and increase the frequency of ACP conversations within the mobile palliative care setting.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Lacey Cooper MSN, APRN, AGNP-C

FACULTY LEAD

Kelley Trump DNP, MSN/ED, RN, CNE, COI

Caitlin Campbell PhD, RN



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